

ing up in the world, and wanted to begin to live. Not a cent had the Holt boys to give.

"Pennies are as scarce at our house as hens' teeth," said Stephen, showing a row of white even teeth as he spoke. James looked doleful. It was hard on them, he thought, to be the only ones in the class who had nothing to give. He looked grimly around on the old church. What should he spy lying in one corner under a seat but a potato!

"How in the world did that potato get to church?" he said, nodding his head toward it. "Somebody must have dropped it that day we were donating potatoes for the poor folks. I say, Stevie, we might give that potato. I suppose it belongs to us as much as to anybody."

Stephen turned and gave a long, thoughtful look at the potato. "That's an idea!" he said eagerly. "Let's do it."

James expected to see a roguish look on his face, but his eyes and mouth said, "I am in earnest."

"Honor bright?" asked James.

"Yes, honor bright."

"How? Split in two and each put half on the plate?"

"No," said Stephen, laughing, "we can't get it ready to give to-day, I guess. But suppose we carry it home and plant it in the nicest spot we can find, and take extra care of it, and give every potato it raises to the missionary cause? There'll be another chance; this isn't the only collection the church will ever take up, and we can sell the potatoes to somebody."

Full of this plan they went into the class looking less sober than before; and though their faces were rather red when the box was passed to them, and they had to shake their heads, they thought of the potato and looked at each other and laughed.

Somebody must have whispered to the earth and the dew and the sunshine about that potato. You never saw anything grow like it! "Beats all!" said Farmer Holt, who was let into the secret. "If I had a twenty-acre lot that would grow potatoes in that fashion, I would make my fortune."

When harvesting came, would you believe that there were forty-one good, sound, splendid potatoes in that hill? Another thing, while the boys were picking them up they talked over the grand mass meeting for missions that was to be held in the church the next Thursday—an all-day meeting. The little church had had a taste of the joy of giving, and was prospering as it had not before. Now for a big meeting to which speakers from headquarters were coming, James and Stephen had their plans made. They washed the forty-one potatoes carefully; they wrote out in their best hand this sentence forty-one times:

"This is a missionary potato; its price is ten cents: it is from the best stock known; it will be sold only to one who is willing to take a pledge that he will plant it in the spring and give every one of its children to missions. (Signed) James and Stephen Holt."

Each shining potato had one of these slips smoothly pasted on its plump side. Did not these potatoes go off, though! By three o'clock Thursday afternoon not one was left, though a gentleman from Chicago offered to give a gold dollar for one of them. Just imagine, if you can, the pleasure with which James and Stephen Holt put each two dollars and five cents into the collection that afternoon. I am sure I cannot describe it to you; but I can assure you of one thing—they each have a missionary garden, and it thrives.—The Pansy.

GIRLS IN THE HINDU SCHOOLS.

Each year all the little girls who have reached the mature age of twelve are obliged to leave school. Some who have been previously married will soon go to live in their husband's home; or, if they are to remain a year longer with their parents, they are considered too big to be seen walking in the public streets. Others are about to be married and must not return to school. Although on good authority, it is stated that the average age at which girls are now married is about two years higher than it was 30 or 40 years ago; still among many castes, infant girls are married.

In one school I recently counted six little girls, all under ten, who bore the red marriage mark in the parting of the hair. One little tot was not over five, another six, two were seven or eight, the others a year or two older. The saddest thing in connection with these very early marriages is the greater liability that the little bride may become a child-widow. The parents do not seem to consider this. They believe that a god wrote the child's fate on its forehead soon after birth, and if it is written that the girl is to become a widow, a widow she must be; nothing they can do will avert her fate. Yet how inconsiderate! They bind all sorts of charms to the arms, the neck, the waist, to ward off evil and to preserve health.

I have urged the Christian women to teach the girls simple hymns, and Bible verses, which tell of the love of God, of a tender, loving, sympathizing Saviour, and to aim to have them so well committed to memory that years hence, when all seems so dark and hopeless, and they are in the despair that is sure to come to many of them, some verse learned in the Mission School may be the means of bringing light and peace and saving them from sin and ruin.

—Ella M. Butts in Missionary Helper.